

1079. 24
K
A TRUE
T A L E
O F
ROBIN HOOD. K



Printed and Sold in London.

THE
T. A. H. B.
OF
ROBIN HOOD

42

6. 27
96



Printed and Sold in London

ROBIN HOOD.



The



The HISTORY of
ROBIN HOOD.

BOTH gentlemen and yeomen bold,
Or whatsoe'er you are,
To have a stately story told,
Attention now prepare.
It is a Tale of Robin Hood,
That to you I will tell,
Which being rightly understood
I know will please you well.
Our Robin Hood so much talk'd on
Was once a man of fame,
Intituled Lord of Huntingdon,
Lord Robin Hood by name.
In courtship and magnificence,
Than any in his days.
In bounteous liberality
He did too much excel,

And loved men of quality
 More than became him well :
 His great revenues all he sold,
 For wine and costly chear,
 He kept three hundred bowmen bold,
 He shooting lov'd so dear.
 No archer living in his time,
 With him might well compare,
 He practis'd all his youthful prime
 In exercise most rare.
 At last by his profuse expence,
 He had consum'd his wealth,
 And being outlaw'd by his prince,
 In woods he liv'd by stealth.
 The Abbot of St. Mary's church,
 To whom he money ow'd,
 His hatred to the Earl was such,
 That he his downfall prov'd.
 So being outlaw'd, as 'tis told,
 He with a crew went forth,
 Of lusty cutters stout and bold,
 Who robbed in the North.
 Among the rest one Little John,
 A yeoman bold and free.
 Who could, if need stood him upon,
 With ease encounter three.
 One hundred men in all he got,
 With whom the story says,
 Three hundred men in arms durst not,
 Keep combat any ways.

The Yorkshire woods frequented much
 And Lancashire also,
 Wherein their practices were such,
 That they wrought mickle woe.
 None rich did travel to and fro
 Tho' ne'er so strongly arm'd,
 But by these thieves so strong in shew,
 They were both robb'd and harm'd.
 His chief spite to the clergy was,
 Who liv'd in monstrous pride,
 Not one of them he would let pass,
 Along the highway side ;
 But first to dinner they must go,
 And afterwards to shrift,
 For they suppos'd that he was ta'en,
 While thus he liv'd by theft,
 Nor Monks and Friars he would let go,
 Without paying of their fees,
 If they pleas'd not to be serv'd so,
 Their stones he made them leave.
 For such as these the country fill'd
 With bastards in those days,
 Which to prevent these spark did geld
 All that came in their way :
 But Robin Hood so gentle was,
 And bore so great a mind,
 If any in distress did pass,
 He was to them most kind :
 That he would give or lend them,
 And help them in their need ;

This made all poor men pray for him,
 And wish he well might speed,
 The widow and the fatherless
 He would send means unto ;
 And those whom fortune did oppress,
 Found him a friendly foe.
 Nor would he do a woman wrong,
 But see her safe convey'd ;
 He would protect with power strong
 All those who crave his aid.
 The Abbot of St. Mary's then,
 Who him undid before,
 Was riding with two hundred men
 And gold and silver store ;
 But Robin Hood upon him set,
 With his courageous sparks,
 And all the coin by force did get,
 Which was ten thousand marks.
 He bound the Abbot to a tree,
 And would not let him pass,



Before that to his men and he,
 His Lordship had said Mass.
 Which being done, upon his horse
 He set him fast astride,
 And with his face towards his arse
 He forced him to ride.
 His men were forc'd to be his guide,
 For he rode backwards home:
 The Abbot being thus villify'd,
 Did sorely fret and fume.
 Thus Robin Hood did vindicate
 His former wrongs receiv'd.
 For 'twas this covetous prelate
 Him of his land bereav'd.
 The Abbot rode unto the King,
 With all the haste he could,
 And to his Grace in every thing
 Exactly did unfold:
 And said, If that no cause was ta'en,
 By force or stratagem,
 To take this rebel and his train,
 No man could pass by them.
 The King protested by-and-by
 Unto the Abbot then,
 That Robin Hood with speed should die,
 And all his merry men;
 But ere the King did any send,
 He did another feat,
 Which did his Grace much more offend,
 The fact indeed was great.

For in short time after that,
 The King's receivers went
 Unto London with coin they had got,
 For his highness' northern rent.
 But Robin Hood and little John
 With the rest of their train,
 Not dreading law set them upon
 And did their gold obtain
 The King much moved at the same,
 And the Abbot's talk also,



In his anger did proclaim,
 And sent word too and fro',
 That whosoe'er alive or dead,
 Would take bold Robin Hood.
 Should have a thousand marks a year,
 In gold and silver good.
 This promise of the King did make
 Full many a yeoman bold

'Attempt bold Hood to take,
 With all the force he could :
 But still when any came him to,
 Within the grey green wood
 He soon made them return again,
 This yeoman was so good.
 He shew'd to them such martial sport,
 With his long bow and arrow,
 That they of him did give report,
 How great it was their sorrow,
 That such a worthy man as he
 Should thus be put to shift :
 Being late a Lord of high renown
 Of living quite bereft :
 The King to take him more and more,
 Sent men of mickle might,
 And he with steel did beat them sore,
 And conquer them in fight :
 Or else by love and courtesy,
 To him he won their hearts.
 So that he liv'd by robbery
 In all the northern parts :
 And all the country far and near,
 Of Robin Hood and his men,
 For stouter lads ne'er liv'd by bread,
 In those days, nor since then.
 The Abbot whom before I nam'd,
 Sought all the means he could
 To have by force this rebel ta'en,
 And his adherents bold ;

Wherefore he arm'd five hundred men,
 With furniture complete ;
 But the outlaws flew half of them.
 And made the rest retreat.
 His long bow and his arrows keen
 They were so us'd unto,
 As still he kept the forest green,
 In spite of the proudest foe.
 Now twelve of the Abbot's men he got,
 Who came to him was ta'en,
 When all the rest the field forsook
 Then he did entertain.



With banquetting and merriment,
 And having us'd them well,
 He to their Lord them safely sent,
 And willed them to tell,
 That if he would be pleas'd at last,
 To beg of our good King,
 That he might pardon what was past,
 And him to favour bring,
 He would surrender back again
 The money that before
 Was taken by him and his men
 From him and many more.
 Poor men might safely go by him.
 And some that way did chuse,
 For well they knew that to help them,
 He evermore did use.
 But where he knew a miser rich,
 That did the poor oppress,
 To feel their coin his hands did itch,
 He had it more or less.
 Nay, sometimes when the highway fails
 Then he his courages rouzes,
 He and his men have oft assail'd
 Such rich men in their houses.
 So their dread of Robin Hood,
 And his adventrous crew,
 The miser's kept great store of men;
 Who else maintain'd but few.
 King Richard of that name the first,
 Sir-nam'd Cœur de Lyon,

When to defeat the Pagans curst,
Who kept the coast of Sion.
The Bishop of Elv Chancellor,
Who was left Vice Roy here.



Who like a potent Emperor,
Did proudly domineer.
Our chronicles of him report,
That commonly he rode
With a thousand horse unto the court ;
Where he would make abode.

He riding down towards the North
 With his afore said train,
 Robin and his men did issue forth,
 Them all to entertain.
 And with the gallant grey goose wing,
 They shewed to them such play,
 They made their horses kick and fling,
 And down the riders lay.
 Fullglad and fain the Bishop was,
 For all his thousand men,



To seek what means he could to pass,
 From out of Robin's ken :
 Two hundred of his men were kill'd,
 And fourscore horses good,
 Thirty who did as captives yield,
 Were brought to the green wood.

Who afterwards were ransomed
 For twenty marks a man ;
 The rest set spurs to horse and fled
 To the town of Warrington.
 The Bishop sore enraged then,
 Did in King Richard's name
 Muster up a power of men,
 These outlaws bold to tame ;
 Bu Robin with his courtesy,
 So won the meaner sort,
 That they were loath on him to try
 What rigor did impart,
 So that bold Robin and his men
 Did live unhurt of them.
 Until King Richard came again,
 From fair Jerusalem.
 And then the talk of Robin Hood
 His royal ears did fill ;
 His Grace admired in the green wood
 He was continued still ;
 So that the country far and near,
 Dd give him great applause ;
 For none of them need stand in fear,
 But such as broke his laws ;
 He wished well unto the King,
 And pray'd still for his health,
 And never practic'd any thing
 Against the common wealth ;
 Only because he was undone
 By the cruel clergy then,

All things that he could think upon
 To vex such sort of men,
 He enterpriz'd with hateful spleen,
 In which he was to blame;
 For fault of one to wreak his teen
 On all that by him came.
 With the wealth he by robberies got,
 Eight alms-houses he built,
 Thinking thereby to purge the blot
 Of blood that he had spilt.
 Such were their blind devotions then
 Depending on their works;
 Which if true we Christian men
 Inferior are to Turks.
 But to speak true of Robin Hood,
 And wrong him not a jot,
 He would not shed any man's blood,
 That him invaded not;
 Nor would he injure husbandmen
 That toil at cart and plow,
 For well he knew wer't not for them,
 To live no men knew how.
 The King in person with some Lords,
 To Nottingham did ride.
 To know what strength and skill afford
 To tame this out-law's pride,
 And as he once before had done,
 He did again proclaim,
 That whosoe'er would take upon
 To bring to Nottingham

Or any place within the land,
 Rebellious Robin Hood,
 Should be prefer'd in place to stand,
 With those of Royal blood.
 When Robin Hood had heard the same
 Within a little space,
 Into the town of Nottingham
 A letter to his Grace,
 He shot upon an arrow head,
 One evening cunningly ;
 Which, before the Lords was read,
 Unto his Majesty.
 The tenor of the letter was,
 That Robin would submit,
 And be true Liegman to his Grace,
 In every thing that's fit ;
 So that his highness would forgive
 Him and his merry men all :
 If not he must in the Green Wood stay,
 And take what chance befal.
 The King would have pardon'd him,
 But that some Lords did say,
 This president will much condemn
 Your Grace another day.
 While the King and Lords did stay,
 Debating on this thing :
 Some of the out-laws fled away
 Unto the Scottish King.
 For they suppos'd if he was ta'en,
 Or to the King did yield,

By law all the rest of his train
 Full quickly should be quell'd.
 Of more than toll an hundred men,
 But forty tarried still,
 Who were resolv'd to stand by him,
 Let Fortune work her will.
 If none had fled, all for his sake,
 Had got their pardons free ;
 The King to favour meant to take
 His merry men and he.
 But ere the pardon to him came,
 his famous archer dy'd ;
 His death, and manner of the same,
 I'll presently describe.
 For being vex'd to think upon
 His followers revolt,
 In melancholy passion
 He did recount his fault ;
 Perfidious Traitors said he then,
 In all your dangers past,
 I have guarded you as my men,
 Now serve me thus at last !
 This sad perplexity did cause
 A fever as some say ;
 Which him in confusion draws,
 Tho' by a stranger way,
 This deadly danger to prevent,
 He hy'd him with all speed,
 Unto a nunnery, with intent
 For health's sake there to bleed.

(192)

A Faithless Friar did pretend
In love to let him blood ;
But he by fallshood wrought the end
Of famous Robin Hood.



The Friar, as some say, did this
To vindicate the wrong.
Which to the clergy he and his
Had done by power strong.
Thus died by treachery,
Who could not die by force ;
Had he liv'd longer certainly,
King Richard in remorse.
Had unto favour him receiv'd,
His brave men elated :
Tis pity he was of life bereav'd,
By one he so much hated.

A treacherous leach this Friar was
 To let him bleed to death ;
 And Robin was methinks an ass.
 To trust him with his breath.
 His corpse the prioress of that place,
 The next day that he dy'd,
 Caus'd to be buried in mean sort
 Along the highway side,
 And over him she caus'd a stone
 To be fix'd in the ground,
 An epitaph was set thereon,
 Whereon his name was found,
 The date of the year and day also,
 She made to be set there :
 That all who by that way did go,
 Might see it plain appear
 That such a man as Robin Hood
 Was buried in that place,
 And how he liv'd in the green wood,
 And robbed there apace.
 It seems that tho' the clergy he
 Had put to mickle woe,
 He should not quite forgotten be,
 Altho' he was their foe.
 The woman tho' she did him hate,
 She loved his memory ;
 And thought it wonderous pity that
 His name with him should die.
 This epitaph as records tell,
 Within three hundred years

By many was discerned well;
 But time all things out wears.
 His followers when he was dead,
 Were some receiv'd to grace :
 The rest to foreign country's fled,
 And left their native place.
 And tho' this funeral was but small,
 The woman had in mind,
 Lest his fame should be buried clean
 From those that came behind;
 For certainly before or since,
 No man e'er understood
 Under the reign of any Prince,
 A man like Robin Hood
 For thirteen years and something more
 These out-laws lived thus :
 Fear'd by the rich, lov'd by the poor,
 A thing most marvellous;
 A thing impossible to us,
 This story seems to be :
 None dares now be so venturous,
 But times are chang'd we see.
 We that live in these happy days
 Of civil government.
 If need he had an hundred men,
 Such rebels to prevent.
 In those days men barbourous were,
 And lived less in awe.
 And God be thanked people fear
 More to offend the law.

No roaring gun was then in use,
 They dreamt of no such thing,
 Our Englishmen in fight did chuse
 The gallant grey goose wing.
 In which activity our men,
 Thro' practice were so good,
 That in those days none equalled them,
 Especially Robin Hood
 So that it seems keeping in caves,
 In woods and forests thick,
 They beat a multitude with slaves,
 Their arrows did so prick.
 And none durst near unto them come,
 Unless in courtesy,
 And all such he would fain send home,
 In mirth and jollity.
 Which courtesy won him much love,
 As I before have told,
 This was the reason he did prove
 More prosperous than he would.
 Let us be thankful for these times
 Of plenty, truth and peace,
 And leave off great and horrid crimes,
 Lest they cause this to cease.
 Let no one think this is a lie,
 For wer't put to the worst,
 They may the truth descry,
 In Richard's reign the first.
 If any reader please to try,
 As I direction show,

The truth of this brave history,
He'll find it truth I know:
And I shall think my labour well
Bestow'd to purpose good,
When it shall be said that I did tell
True Tales of Robin Hood.



The Epitaph which the Prioress set over Robin Hood, which, as it is before-mention- was to be read within three Years, though in Old English, much to the same Sente and Meaning as hereafter followeth:

Decembris Quarto Die, 1228.

Anno Regnis RICHARD I.

ROBERT, Earl of Huntingdon,
Lies underneath this stone:
No archer was like him so good,
His wildness named him ROBIN HOOD.
Full thirteen years something more,
These northern parts he vexed sore;
Such Out-laws as he and his men,
May England never see again.

F I N I S.



